

There is no nationwide standard for training and certification of emergency medical personnel, and Federal responsibility for oversight is scattered across multiple Federal agencies.

Thirdly, critical specialists are often unavailable to provide emergency trauma care. Three-quarters of hospitals report difficulty finding specialists to take emergency and trauma calls. Key specialties are in short supply. Specialists often treat emergency room patients without compensation. And there is extremely high medical liability.

Fourthly, the emergency system is ill-prepared to handle a major disaster. There is little surge capacity. The emergency medical services received only 4 percent of Department of Homeland Security first responder funding in 2002 and 2003. Emergency medical technicians in nonfire-based services have less than 1 hour of training in disaster response, and hospital and EMS personnel lack protective equipment to effectively respond to chemical, biological or nuclear threats.

In response to these four deficiencies, the Institute of Medicine made the following recommendations. One, create a coordinated, regionalized and accountable system. Two, create a lead agency. Three, end emergency department boarding and diversion. Fourthly, increase funding for emergency care. Fifthly, enhance emergency care research. And finally, promote the EMS workforce standards.

I have sought with the bill, H.R. 5555, the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act, to address this issue. A coordinated and thoughtful plan must be applied to improve our trauma care system in this country.

Anyone or their family member could need trauma care in the blink of an eye. Wouldn't we all want to know that we are receiving the very best trauma care available quickly and efficiently?

□ 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SKELTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATS AND THE BUDGET DEFICIT

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Permission to speak out of turn, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of being the first of a series of Democratic speakers tonight about the budget. And my colleagues will talk in some detail about the deficit and the debt and its consequence on the country.

But, if I can, I want to begin with a memory of a 10-year-old child growing

up in Montgomery, Alabama. I remember being 10 years old and listening to a very conservative radio commentator talking about the liberal government in Washington, D.C., spending too much money.

I remember hearing this very skilled radio commentator talk about the fact that amazingly the Government of the United States of America was running a \$36 billion deficit, and that it might rise to \$100 billion the next year.

And I remember hearing that very conservative radio commentator say: If we do not get our hands on our budget, if we do not figure out a way to restore fiscal discipline, there was no way that we can have a strong and solvent economy.

Well, that radio commentator was named Ronald Reagan. He would be elected to the Presidency 2 years later; would forget a lot of what he said. He ended up running up massive deficits during his own time in office.

I begin with that observation, Mr. Speaker, because for the next, what is it, 51 days between now and November 7, we will hear a lot of talk about which party can be trusted to better manage the money of the American people. We will hear a lot of talk in this 51 days about the danger of Democrats being fiscally reckless and irresponsible, and we will be told that all we will do is we will tax people too much, and we will spend too much.

And I looked in the paper today, Mr. Speaker. The President's approval ratings are rising, we are told, and they are rising for one reason. He has gone from a 70 percent approval rating among Republicans to 86 percent.

And when I read the various political reports that we are regularly favored with in this city, I read the Republican's strategy on November 7 hinges on one factor: bringing home the base. Bringing home those Republicans in Tennessee and Missouri and Ohio who drifted away, getting them to come back and to believe again.

So I want to direct my remarks, if I can, at the Republican base for a minute. I am not a member of it. We have got a lot of conservatives in Alabama, and I think I can speak to them. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, I want them to know a few basic facts.

I want them to know that fiscal conservatism has changed its meaning in this city, and the government in which they put their votes and in which they put so much faith is now running up these massive deficits, and the Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors went before a group of Republican-leaning businessmen last week and said, you know what, it doesn't even matter. Deficits are just things that the statisticians worry about.

I want all of the conservative people who are listening tonight, again, many of whom are in my great State of Alabama, to know that, well, you may be a conservative, I bet you care about the security of your border. One of the

reasons we cannot put enough money around enforcing border security is because of these debts and deficits your government is running up.

To all of the conservatives who are listening tonight, you may be a conservative, but I will bet you would love to see the veterans of this country given adequate health care. Well, the government that you value so much, the government to which you have given your votes the last several cycles cannot do it because they cannot afford it.

We had a debate on this floor, Mr. Speaker, just 1 year ago, September of 2005. The subject was whether we were going to provide full funding for health care for Guards and reservists. And our esteemed colleagues on the other side of the aisle rose in the Chamber and said, we just cannot afford it; it has got to be health care for veterans and reservists, or it has got to be helicopters. We cannot afford to do both. In part, that is because of the debt and the deficits that we have.

I want to say finally to these conservatives, Mr. Speaker, before you go back home so easily, before you go back to your base, understand what your party has become, a conservative party that says the debt does not matter, a conservative party that says that red ink is not important, and a conservative party that cannot find enough money to secure the border or provide benefits for veterans. It is enough to prevent you from going home. It is enough to make you look at an alternative.

Now, my colleagues will talk tonight, Mr. Speaker, about a lot of other lost opportunities. They will talk about the fact that if we could get our fiscal house in order, we could do all kinds of things that we thought we could do just a short time ago. You remember the debates, Mr. Speaker, when there was a \$236 billion surplus. Republicans had ideas on what they could do. They talked about middle-class tax cuts instead of upper-end tax cuts. People on my side of the aisle talked about a refurbished commitment to veterans and the health care and education. We cannot debate any of those things right now because of this debt and these deficits.

So I end with that point. The conservatism that is on the ballot on November 7 is a conservatism of missed opportunities. It is a conservatism that has totally changed the notion of what it means to be fiscally responsible. It is a conservatism that is fading and failing for a reason.

I think a lot of people will come home on November 7, Mr. Speaker, but it will not be to a party that used to call itself conservative, it will be to common sense, it will be to a notion of reasonable sacrifice in this country, of shared sacrifice. And that is why I think the ranks will change so much on November 7.